Startling parallels to the 1930s authoritarianism

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Gary L. Thompson refers to the Roy Meachum's "History lesson" column (Jan. 3) as "the most despicable, dastardly, scurrilous lie that has yet departed his feeble brain." This is because, Mr. Thompson said, Mr. Meachum "compared" all "the Republican members of Congress," not merely the know-nothings who have taken control in the House, "to the Nazi party of the 1930."

Mr. Thompson's political preferences and his prejudices are clear, as is his lack of knowledge of what he writes about.

I lived through and have some recollection of those days of the early 1930s. There are startling parallels, as Mr. Meachum wrote.

If Mr. Thompson is capable of reading anything not in accord with what he wants to believe rather that what is, he can find confirmation of this in a book I am reading: "Germany, Hitler & World War II," by the eminent scholar, Gerhard L. Weinberg. It was published only last year by the Cambridge University Press, one of the world's greatest institutions of authentic scholarship.

Mr. Thompson also says that by "inference" Mr. Meachum compares Gingrich with Hitler. It is probably lost on Mr. Thompson that there is a form of authoritarianism in the Gingrich ploy of using the continuing operation of the government as a means of extorting from the president what he cannot do the American way, with a vote of the Congress that is then subject to the veto of the third of our co-equal branches of government, the president. This is because the Gingriches do not have the votes to override the veto.

Mr. Thompson says the "mantra" of the Democrats is "if we could just spend more money." Here, more recent history is outside Mr. Thompson's ken.

When Ronald Reagan was elected with promises that we keep hearing from some Republicans, the national debt, accumulated throughout all of our history by all the presidents before Reagan, was only a third of what he, personally, added to the national debt.

And that with the resistance of the Democrats, who did succeed in holding back his unprecedented spending of public money that continued under George Bush.

Yet, despite this and probably having swallowed that line about "Tax and Spend Democrats" when the Republicans were doing just that, Mr. Thompson says that those he refers to as "the old lefties," who really are those who believe in our system as created by the founding fathers, not the extremists who seek to change that, "can finish out their lives unable to inflict the economic damage upon the rest of us" that he says they dream of.

But that, without question, Reagan and Bush did.

The famous philosopher Georges Santayana once said that those who do not remember the past are doomed to relive it.

It would be a good thing for the country and healthy for them if the Gary Thompsons would learn our history so they can remember it instead of spouting their political preferences and their personal prejudices and pretend that it is history.

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